



**CONSUL GENERALS' REMARKS TO  
PARKDALE SECONDARY COLLEGE**

August 15<sup>th</sup> 2007 11.00 am - 12.00 midday  
Invitation from Senior School Vice Principal Chris McGuire.  
Principal: Greg McMahan

This is my first visit to Parkdale Secondary College since I have been in Melbourne, so thank you and Mr. Chris McGuire for inviting me to meet with you.

It is my sincere pleasure to be with you today.

My son is in year 10 here in Melbourne, so I am sympathetic to how hard you all must be studying at the moment.

I am the U.S. Consul General. I head the U.S. Consulate General here in Melbourne, which you can think of as the branch office of our embassy in Canberra.

We have Consulates General in Sydney and Perth as well.

The Embassy is an institution that acts as the direct link between the government of the United States and the Government of Australia, and between our two peoples.

The Ambassador is the official and personal envoy of the President in Australia.

Robert McCallum is the U.S. Ambassador to Australia and I am a member of his team.

A Consulate's first mandate is to protect American citizens and their interests abroad. Consulate General Melbourne serves a U.S. expatriate community of about 40,000 individuals and three times as many tourists.

With a staff of about 40 people at the Consulate General, we are responsible for the territory covering Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

I heard some of you have an interest in our consular activities, and had hoped to have someone join us today from the Consular section. However, the entire mission is busy preparing for the Leader's meeting of the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation group (known as APEC), and therefore no one could get away.

I am happy, though, to take questions you may have about Consular activities at the end. If I don't know the answer, I have people who work for me that do, and promise to get back to you.

My chief duty as Consul General is to speak to members of the Australian public on a broad range of topics, and in my addresses I strive to explain the policies of the U.S.

Government.

I understand you are all students of history, and have been studying the Cold War, focusing on the study of colonization and the history of revolutions.

I have some experience of the Cold War since I lived through it, studied it, and worked under its constraints.

At university I specialized in what Americans call political science. I studied the development of political philosophy, American constitutional law, and what was then a cutting edge pursuit: Using the tools of other disciplines to predict certain behaviors, such as when countries might go to war.

I also studied Russian, which at the time was considered a shrewd thing to do for a prospective diplomat, because it was the language of our chief adversary, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or U.S.S.R.

So today, I am going to explain how the United States' international role and responsibilities were shaped by the Cold War, and how the Cold War molded our commitment to peace, stability and prosperity for all those who seek it.

Although the Cold War was over before you were even born, its legacy is still important to us all - indeed the policy and politics of international relations as we recognize them today were shaped by the great rivalry between the two ideologies advanced by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

Over the years the rivalry between the camps hardened into a mutual preoccupation, dominating the foreign policy agenda of each for four decades, and led the Soviet Union to financial collapse.

At the end of the Second World War, the United States and the Soviet Union were the most significant countries in the world, having been described by American political scientist William T.R. Fox as “superpowers” in 1944.

A superpower is a state with a leading position in the international system and the ability to influence events and project power on a global scale.

It's an interesting fact that originally, Professor Fox used the term to describe the U.S., the U.S.S.R., and the British Empire.

The decision makers in Washington understood that, with its wealth, power, industrial base and population emerging largely intact following World War II, the United States had a responsibility to facilitate economic recovery, and take a leadership role in establishing international peace.

As you are all aware, the ideologies that formed the foundations of the Soviet Union and the United States differed greatly. The Soviet Union, under Stalin and its subsequent leaders, subscribed to a Marxist-Leninist ideology, which called on a centralized government to overthrow the upper class, and consolidate power among workers, establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat, in anticipation of a worldwide proletarian revolution.

The U.S., on the other hand, was based on the principles of self-determination, democratic government, collective security, and international law.

The tension was apparent on all fronts - military, political, and economic. Perhaps the most notable Cold War arena was the race to build nuclear weapons.

The pressure spread across the globe and as you know from your studies - no country, even Australia, escaped the uncertainty of the Cold War.

For example, Australia joined with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) during the height of the Cold War to address common concerns and issues that transcend national boundaries, such as regional security and stability.

It was during the Cold War, and the build-up of nuclear weapons, that the idea of Mutually Assured Destruction or “MAD” evolved.

Both countries believed that the other possessed such a cache of weapons that if attacked, it could counter-attack and destroy the other nation before being wiped out itself. The assumption behind MAD was that if no one could be sure of surviving a nuclear war, there would not be one.

The ever present threat of nuclear war and its effects on all of us became deeply ingrained into the psyche and even the popular culture of the Western world.

Leaders on both sides of the Iron Curtain – a term popularized by Winston Churchill in his 1946 “Sinews of Peace” address-- realized that they had arsenals with enough kilotons of nuclear explosives sufficient to blow up the world many times over.

In the West popular pressure built up on governments to step back from the ever spiraling arms race.

In the East, fear of annihilation coupled with the cost of keeping pace with the West, brought a change of outlook.

Throughout the seventies we began to develop arms controls agreements.

Worrisome to both sides was the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the United Kingdom, France – which having withdrawn militarily from NATO argued it needed its own “force de frappe” -- and China, with which the Soviet Union shared a long border, but strained relations and divergent interpretations of Marxist doctrine.

President Reagan increased military spending, with the production of new weapons systems. The central part of this strategy was the Strategic Defense Initiative, a space-based anti-ballistic missile system which came to be known as "Star Wars".

Faced with increasing economic and public pressure during the second part of 1980's, President Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev negotiated agreements to reduce nuclear stockpiles, thus signaling the beginning of the end for the Cold War.

It was also becoming obvious that the Soviet economy was collapsing under the pressure to keep up with the U.S.

President George H.W. Bush, (the first President Bush), sensing the U.S.S.R.'s inevitable collapse, worked to reduce U.S. force numbers throughout Europe and to promote the unification of East and West Germany.

President Bush worked with Mikhail Gorbachev to cut around 40% of their countries' nuclear arsenals, and to eliminate all multiple warhead missiles.

In 1991 the U.S.S.R. was disestablished. Boris Yeltsin became president of the New Russian Federation and yielded to America and others the geopolitical space his country once influenced.

I was serving at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow during the end of the Cold War, and I was able to get a hint of our changing role in the world stage, most clearly on June 12, 1987, when President Reagan at Berlin's Brandenburg Gates challenged his counterpart in Moscow: "Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

In the previous year, the Soviet leader had put in place the policy of "glasnost," or openness, following the Chernobyl reactor meltdown, which spewed radioactive fallout into the atmosphere over Western Europe.

It was an adjunct of “perestroika,” or restructuring, the reforms introduced in June 1985 by Gorbachev to give state enterprises greater freedom to produce and sell their products. The idea was eventually to move the Soviet government away from the business of rigid central planning of the economy. Glasnost was Gorbachev’s attempt to put the Soviet Union on an equal moral footing with the West and improve the Soviet economy through better information flow. Eventually, the reform proved too much for the inflexible and ultimately brittle Soviet system.

And so, the United States shouldered the burden of being the sole remaining superpower.

The responsibilities that came with the title loomed large.

Today the threat of nuclear war is not as prevalent as it was during the Cold War. However there are other actors using the threat of violence and terrorism to advance political and ideological agendas.

Once there was a monolith of threat, our cold war adversary - now the threat is scattered across many countries and takes many forms.

The increase in terrorism around the world has once again highlighted our obligation to ensure the message of liberty and democracy is well heard – to protect our country, and our allies against a bleak future.

But, we cannot be all things to all people. President Kennedy said we need to “face the fact that the United States is neither omnipotent nor omniscient ” and with issues central to the tenets of civilization, as protecting liberty and democracy we need support from those who share our vision and values of peace, prosperity and stability through liberty and freedom.

This is why our relationship with Australia is so dear and important to us – we strive to promote democracy and liberty and to promote stability, with the help and cooperation of Australia and its citizens.

Please let me reiterate to you today that the Australia-U.S. alliance is not just a concept bandied about - we see it as the true manifestation of our shared core values and common purpose of our two peoples.

We managed to emerge from arguably the most dangerous period of human history with the planet still in one piece.

However, there are pressing problems to which we need to apply our minds, for example not only how both Australia and the United States can best combat terrorism, but also disease pandemics, climate change, poverty and underdevelopment and many other issues.

You are the future of this wonderful country and its destiny will be in your hands. It is a serious responsibility, so prepare yourselves well for it. If my words today spur you in your future lives and professions to strengthening the relationship between our two countries, then I feel that my work here has been done.

Thank you for sharing your time with me today. I look forward to answering any of your questions.